WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of quantitating IL-1β in a bone marrow preparation comprising;

a) culturing stromal cells with said bone marrow prep aration;

b) determining the amount of IL-6 produced by said stromal cell culture; and

c) correlating the amount of IL-6 produced to the IL-1β concentration in said bone marrow preparation by comparison to a standard curve prepared by measuring IL-6 produced by stromal cells contacted with known concentrations of IL-1β.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said bone marrow preparation is from a patient suffering from multiple myeloma (MM) or a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder.

3. A method of detecting multiple myeloma (MM) in an individual comprising:

a) culturing stromal cells with a bone marrow preparation from said individual; and

b) determining the amount of IL-6 produced by said stromal cell culture, wherein an elevated level of IL-6 is indicative of MM.

4. A method of identifying a patient with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder likely to progress to active multiple myeloma (MM) comprising:

a) culturing stromal cells with a bone marrow preparation from said patient; and

b) determining the amount of IL-6 produced by said stromal cell culture, wherein an elevated level of IL-6 is indicative of a likelihood said patient will progress to active MM.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS).

6. The method of claim 4, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is smoldering multiple myeloma (SMM).

7. The method of claims 3 or 4, wherein an elevated level of IL-6 is a concentration of IL-6 greater than that produced by stromal cells incubated with 1 pg/ml of recombinant IL-1β.

8. The method of any one of claims 1-7, wherein said bone marrow preparation is selected from the group consisting of a fresh supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells, a previously frozen supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells and a mononuclear cell preparation purified from bone marrow.

9. The method of any one of claims 1-7, wherein an inhibitor of IL-1β is added to the stromal cell culture of step a).

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said inhibitor of IL-1β is selected from the group consisting of an anti-ILβ antibody, a soluble IL-1 receptor (sIL-1R) type I, a sIL-1R type II, an interleukin-1 receptor antagonist (IL-1ra) and an IL-1 TRAP.

11. A method of identifying a patient with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder likely to progress to active multiple myeloma (MM) comprising:

a) culturing a bone marrow preparation from said patient with a T-cell line that produces IL-2 in response to IL-1β;

b) determining the amount of IL-2 produced by said T-cell line; and

c) identifying said patient as likely to progress to MM if said amount of IL-2 is elevated.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS).

13. The method of claim 11, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is smoldering multiple myeloma (SMM).

14. The method of claim 11, wherein said T-cell line is selected from the group consisting of EL4.6.1, LBRM 33 and primary cultures of thymocytes.

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15. A method of monitoring the effectiveness of the treatment of a patient multiple myelom (MM) comprising:

a) culturing stromal cells with a bone marrow preparation from said patient after the initiation of treatment;

b) determining the amount of IL-6 produced by said stromal cell culture; and

c) comparing said amount of IL-6 with a known standard or a patient determined standard.

16. A method of treating a patient with multiple myeloma (MM) comprising:

a) identifying a patient with MM; and

b) administering an inhibitor of interleukin-1J (IL-1J) to said patient.

17. A method of inhibiting interleukin-6 (IL-6) production by bone marrow stromal cells in a patient suffering from multiple myeloma (MM) or a multiple myeloma-related plamaproliferative disorder comprising administering an inhibitor of interleukin-1β (IL-1β) to said patient in an amount effective to inhibit the production of IL-6 by said bone marrow stromal cells.

18. A method of inhibiting interleukin-6 induced myeloma cell proliferation in a patient suffering from multiple myeloma (MM) or a multiple myeloma-related plamaproliferative disorder comprising administering an inhibitor of interleukin-1β (IL-1β) to said patient in an amount sufficient to inhibit myeloma cell proliferation.

19. The method of either of claim 17 or claim 18, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is selected from the group consisting of monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS), smoldering multiple myeloma (SMM) and indolent multiple myeloma (IMM).

20. A method of inhibiting the progression from monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS) to multiple myeloma (MM) in a patient suffering from MGUS comprising administering an inhibitor of interleukin-1β (IL-1β) to said patient.

21. A method of inhibiting the progression from smoldering multiple myeloma (SMM) to multiple myeloma (MM) in a patient suffering from SMM comprising administering an inhibitor of interleukin-1β (IL-1β) to said patient.

22. The method of any one of claims 17-21, wherein said inhibitor of IL-1β is selected form the group consisting of an anti-ILβ antibody, a soluble IL-1 receptor (sIL-1R) type I, a sIL-1R type II, an interleukin-1 receptor antagonist (IL-1ra) and an IL-1 TRAP.

23. A kit comprising:

a) an inhibitor of bioactive IL-1β;

b) a negative control for the inhibitor of bioactive IL-1β; and

c) a positive control for bioactive IL-1β.

24. The kit of claim 23, wherein the inhibitor of bioactive IL-1β is selected from the group consisting of an anti-ILβ antibody, a soluble IL-1 receptor (sIL-1R) type I, a sIL-1R type II, an interleukin-1 receptor antagonist (IL-1ra) and an IL-1 TRAP.

25. The kit of claim 23, wherein said positive control for bioactive IL-1β is recombinant IL-1β.

26. The kit of claim 23, further comprising a label or package insert indicating that said positive control for bioactive IL-1β is used to prepare a standard curve of IL-6 produced by stromal cells contacted with known concentrations of bioactive IL-1β.

27. The kit of claim 23 further comprising bone marrow stromal cells.